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THE BLOOMFIELD CITIZEN.

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$90,000 ACCEPTED

BY THE ORANGE WATER COMPANY AS THE PRICE OF ITS PLANT.

The Proposition a Surprise to the Members of the Town Council—Immediate Steps will be Taken Towards Submitting the Matter to a Vote of the People—Municipal Ownership will be the Direct Issue.

Town Clerk William L. Johnson received a reply on Wednesday from the Orange Water Company to the letter sent to the company by direction of the Council, and which contained an offer of $90,000 for the company's plant in this town. This offer was a formal one, and was made in accordance with a resolution adopted at a public meeting in Central Hall on Thursday evening, October 29. In accepting the offer the company stipulates that the Council shall assume and carry out the contract now existing between it and the Montclair Water Company, under which the latter sells water to the Orange Water Company at the rate of eighty dollars per million gallons, and it has eighteen months yet to run. The resolution sent by the Council to the company on Monday evening, December 7, was as follows:

"Resolved, That the Town Council be and they are hereby requested to offer the Orange Water Company the sum of $90,000 for the purchase of its plant located in the streets of Bloomfield; and be it further

"Resolved, That if the Orange Water Company shall not accept said offer of $90,000 for its said plant within ten days from the date of receiving the same, the Town Council of Bloomfield be and they are hereby advised to at once to take the necessary proceedings for the construction of a new and adequate system of water mains and pipes in this town."

As before stated, the offer tendered on Monday evening, December 7, was merely a formal compliance with the above resolution, and there was no hope or expectation that it would meet with acceptance, and the action of the water company came as a surprise both to the Councilmen and the people. Several sensational episodes have occurred in the long pending negotiations over the water question. When the Council called a special election on November 10, a sensation was created throughout the town, and on Wednesday the water company furnished a sensational chapter in the case.

The negotiations between the Orange Water Company and the Town Council for the purchase of the water company's plant in this town began shortly after the sale by the company of the East Orange portion of the plant to that city. The water company opened the negotiations with an offer to sell, and the price asked was $220,000. The Council responded with an offer of $90,000, which of course was rejected. Numerous conferences followed at which a compromise price of $150,000 was reached, and below which the legal counsel of the company and who represented it in the negotiations, would not recede. In the meantime the Council procured an estimate of the cost of duplicating the plant. The estimate was for 2,000 domestic services, but with no pipe larger than ten inches, for the sum of $174,319.14; and a further estimate for duplication submitting, however, six inch pipe in place of four inch, for the sum of $191,922.42.

After several months of negotiating and conferring, Mr. Munn put the proposition of the company and a detailed explanation of it in writing, and it was submitted to the Council and made public by that body. Mr. Munn's letter was as follows:

To the Town Council, Bloomfield, N. J.:

In our communication of October 8, 1903, we made among other things the following proposition:

"We will sell our distribution system with all its connections for $150,000, sale to date from October 1st."

We will say in answer to some inquiries as to the precise meaning of this proposition, that we included in the same according to our understanding, all the street mains and pipes, hydrants, specials, and all connections including the house connections taps and gates at curb line, and this carries with it all our right to distribute and sell water in Bloomfield to public and private consumers.

We will undertake that if bonds are duly issued for the whole amount at four per cent. interest for a term of thirty years, a bid will be made at such a rate that the entire expense of all the proceedings to issue the bonds, including engraving and printing the bonds, will be covered by the premium.

The contract with the Montclair Water Company for a supply of water for Bloomfield, which will expire May 1,

Continued on page 2.

Order your half-shell oysters for Christmas dinner at Hopler's.—*Adv.*

The Messiah.

The sale of reserved seat tickets for the musical festival to be given in the Watsessing Methodist Church on Friday evening, January 8, when Handel's oratorio "The Messiah" will be sung, has been highly gratifying to the committee of arrangements, and assurances are now at hand that the affair will be largely attended and that the audience will be made up of people who have more than a passing interest in music. The oratorio will be conducted by the choirmaster of the church, Arthur A. Eilor. A chorus of fifty-five voices and an orchestra of twenty pieces have been engaged and are now holding weekly rehearsals. The soloists engaged are: Miss Marie Stoddard of New York, soprano; Miss Florence Stockwell of Westminster quartette, contralto; Mr. Edward Walker of New York, tenor; Mr. Millard Roubaud of Westminster quartette, basso.

The oratorio "The Messiah" has been sung in the Watsessing Church for many years at Christmas time, and the church is not large enough to accommodate the throng of people who have been anxious to hear it. Mr. Eilor has made an exhaustive study of the oratorio, and previous productions of it under his direction have called forth encomiums of congratulation and praise from people who have heard the Handel music sung in music halls in this country and Europe. Mr. Eilor is fortunate in being able to get together a chorus and orchestra familiar with the music. The securing of Miss Stockwell and Mr. Roubaud of the Westminster Presbyterian Church for solo work gives great satisfaction. It has heretofore been difficult to secure a base soloist for local productions of "The Messiah," but Mr. Roubaud's work at a recent rehearsal demonstrated to the delight of the conductor, the chorus and the orchestra that he was the man for the place.

Owing to the expense incurred in the preparations for this proposed elaborate production of the oratorio, it is imperative that an admission fee be charged. Reserved seat tickets can be procured for 50 cents, and general admission tickets 35 cents.

Fire at Rassbach's.

The Glen Ridge Fire Department was called out about five o'clock Wednesday morning for a fire on the premises of John Rassbach & Son, florists, Maolis avenue. The office room and workshop were destroyed, and the north end of several green-houses were badly damaged, and the intense heat from the fire and subsequent exposure to the cold ruined a large number of valuable plants kept in the green-houses, and entailed a loss to the firm estimated at between four and five thousand dollars. The origin of the fire is a mystery. Roswel H. Johnson, who slept in a room on the second story of the office building, had a narrow escape from death. He was almost overcome with the dense smoke that filled his room. He had to leave his clothes and his personal effects behind him when he fled from the building, and these were all destroyed by the fire. He aroused the Messrs. Rassbach, and the fire was fought with garden hose until the arrival of the firemen, who made quick response, considering the time. The salvage corps of the fire department did good work, and took precautions to protect the exposed plants in the green-houses from damage by frost. As soon as the flames were extinguished and the heat had sufficiently subsided, the open ends of the green-houses were at once enclosed and fires started in them.

Dispute Over Ticket.

Henry A. Petry, a conductor on the Bloomfield avenue trolley line was arrested in Montclair Tuesday afternoon by Policeman Gilbert Smith on a charge of assault preferred by Charles H. Winter of No. 66 Race street, who was a passenger on his car. Recorder Cadmus held the accused in $100 bail for the grand jury. Winters boarded the car in Newark and tendered the conductor part of an excursion ticket, which, it is said, the latter refused to honor for the reason that it had been mutilated. Winters declared that he was not responsible for the mutilation and that the conductor of another car had torn the ticket. Petry demanded fare, which Winters refused to pay, whereupon, it is said, the conductor attempted to put the passenger off the car. Winters claims he was jammed against the door, breaking a pane of glass. On the car at the time was Constable Teed, of the Sheriff's office, who interfered and threatened to arrest the conductor. Winters remained on the car until this town was reached, and with Constable Teed went to the police station, where a warrant for the conductor's arrest was issued. A number of passengers on the car gave Winters their names as witnesses.

Violin and piano instruction at pupil's home or teacher's residence. For terms address William J. Maier, No. 47 Fairmount avenue, Newark, N. J.—*Adv.*

TAXATION PROBLEMS.

The Difficulties that Confront Tax Assessors in Making an Equitable Assessment of Property in this Town.—Large Tracts of Farm Land and Unimproved Property are Perplexing Features of the Case.—The Brookdale Assessment a Source of Anxiety.

The equitable assessment of Brookdale property has been an animated theme of discussion among the members of the Board of Assessors and the members of the Board of Commissioners of Appeals for the past several weeks. The problem is one not readily solved. There is a decidedly marked difference in condition between the respective portions of the town north and south of Bay avenue. The necessities that exist south of Bay avenue for that form of government most resembling a city in its functions do not exist north of Bay avenue, and as a matter of fact are not extended throughout that territory. A simple and inexpensive form of government would meet all requirements in the territory north of Bay avenue. It is conceded by all who undertake the discussion of taxing problems in this town that the district known as Brookdale ought not to be assessed anywhere near in proportion to property south of Bay avenue, but while it is easy to grant the concession, it is not so easy to reach the equitable basis of proportion. If it were left to some of the owners of property in Brookdale to fix the ratio that district would not return to the town treasury the amount that the town would be required to expend there annually. On the other hand, there are those south of Bay avenue who would impose taxable valuations upon Brookdale that would compel an unjust proportion of tax to be paid by the farm owners. The Board of Assessors cannot be governed by radical views on either side. The Assessors can only be guided by a careful study of the situation and arrive as near as possible at a fair idea of the benefits derived by Brookdale as a district from the town government in the matter of roads, lights, schools and county interests, also taking into consideration the steady appreciation in value of farm property by reason of general development of the town and district.

At present the territory known as Brookdale is a handicap to Bloomfield, and people who are groaning about the heavy tax rate should make a careful study of the conditions before charging official extravagance and incapacity upon those intrusted with the affairs of government. No town that has within its territory an undue proportion of vacant land supposed to be used for farming purposes can carry on highly developed government without an excessively high tax rate, and it needs not much more than a glance over the map of Bloomfield to be convinced that this town has an undue share of undeveloped property. East Orange has its Grove street, and the property along it is highly developed and returns an enormous revenue to the city, but the continuation of that street in Bloomfield presents a lifeless and undeveloped condition and returns but a meager revenue to the town. Arlington avenue is a repetition of the same state of affairs; so is Prospect street and a large part of Glenwood avenue. All over the town we see large tracts of undeveloped property and from which but little revenue can be derived in the way of taxes. But on this undeveloped property south of Bay avenue a far larger proportion of assessment can be found than upon the farm land north of Bay avenue, for the reason that the owners of the former are not dependent upon it for their sole income. In Brookdale the case is different. There the people farm the land and its taxable valuation depends somewhat on the average annual income it returns, and it does not require any great stretch of imagination to show but little cash income from the average farm.

Basket-Ball League.

The Northern New Jersey Interscholastic League has issued its schedule for the 1904 basket ball championship games. The league is now composed of only four schools—Orange High School, Bloomfield High School, Passaic High School, and Paterson High School. The South Orange High School recently dropped out, expecting to be taken into the folds of the New Jersey Interscholastic League, but it did not get membership in the latter organization. The Northern New Jersey League invited the Rutherford and Hackensack Schools to join, but the latter two have not yet made known their decision. The basket-ball schedule of the league is as follows:

January 7, Passaic at Paterson; 13, Paterson at Orange, Bloomfield at Passaic; 20, Bloomfield at Orange; 28, Bloomfield at Paterson; February 3, Passaic at Orange, Paterson at Bloomfield; 11, Orange at Paterson, Passaic at Bloomfield; 18, Orange at Bloomfield, Paterson at Passaic; 25, Orange at Passaic.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC.

John Spencer Camp's Christmas Cantata, "Prince of Peace," will be Sung by the Westminster Church Choir and Quartette To-morrow Night.—A Spirited and Melodious Cantata with Plenty of Solo Work.

The Westminster people have decided to sing their Christmas cantata to-morrow evening, instead of waiting until after Christmas, as is the custom in most churches. The work selected for this occasion is John Spencer Camp's "Prince of Peace," a spirited and melodious cantata, with plenty of solo work for all parts and several good choruses. "Mary's Slumber Song" (alto) is a sweet and beautiful number, replete with tender maternal love. This song alone will amply repay any one for the hour and a half's time. Other solos are musically good, but none so emotional. The work is divided into seven parts, as follows:

1. *Triumph of Prophecy.*—Soprano solo and chorus, "Arise, shine"; chorus, "And the ransomed of the Lord."
2. *The Annunciation.*—Baritone solo, "The Angel Gabriel was sent from God"; soprano solo, "Hail thou that art highly favored."
3. *The Vision of the Shepherds.*—Chorus (pastorale), "There were Shepherds"; tenor solo, "And the Angel said unto them"; chorus, "Glory to God in the Highest."
4. *The Journey of the Shepherds.*—Baritone solo, "And it came to pass;" men's voices, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem"; alto solo, "And they came with haste"; men's voices, "O come, all ye faithful"; chorus, "Sing, Choirs of Angels"; chorus and congregation, "Yea, Lord, we greet Thee."
5. *The Quest of the Magi.*—Baritone solo, "And behold there came wise men;" men's voices, "Where is He that was born King"? baritone solo, "When Herod, the King;" men's voices, "In Bethlehem of Judea;" baritone solo, "Then Herod, when he had privily called"; men's voices, "And when they heard the King"; women's voices, "Let every soul be thrilled"; chorus, "Our God is great and King of all."
6. *Mary's Slumber Song.*—Alto solo, "Sleep, little child of my heart."
7. *The Flight into Egypt.*—Baritone solo, "O who are these that fly?" tenor solo, "This Mary and the Child"; baritone solo, "And shall they refuge find?" tenor solo, "The Child shall live and thrive"; chorus, "Then sing aloud for gladness"; tenor solo, "And the Word became flesh"; chorus and congregation, "All hail the power of Jesus' name."

The solos will be sung by the Westminster quartette. The members of the chorus are:

Sopranos—Miss Helen Newton, Miss Grace Shaw, Miss Alice Duncan, Miss Louise Russell, Mrs. Paul F. Handel, Miss Florence Searing, Miss Mabel Palmer, Miss Annie Van Tassle.

Altos—Miss Gertrude Defendorf, Mrs. Stewart Campbell, Miss Nettie Jacobus, Miss Ono Imhoff, Miss Emily Moyer, Mrs. J. Fred Willits.

Tenors—Chas. B. Woodward, John Moull, James Sherrer, Albert Spear, Elmer Roubaud, George Cook.

Basses—Quincy Scott, H. B. Sheldon, John Roe, Alfred Martin, Donald Amerman, Norman Biggart. Director—J. Louis Minier.

"Ben Hur" at the Newark Theatre.

Messrs. Klaw and Erlanger's stupendous and wonderful production of "Ben Hur," is to be presented at the Newark Theatre for the first time next week. "Ben Hur" is brought direct to Newark from its New York engagement at the New York Theatre, and it is the same elaborate production which was made by the management for the long run this famous play enjoyed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London. There is much interest aroused in the coming of "Ben Hur," as it is a dramatic event of such magnitude as is rarely offered to playgoers. The organization numbers some 350 people, including a large acting cast, chorus and ballet.

The beautiful music which is interpolated throughout the play is by Edgar Stillman Kelley and tends to make this highly dramatic and romantic story of "Ben Hur" nearly the ideal. The chariot race is without question the most exciting and stirring scene in the production. It is such a clever illusion that it becomes a positive reality. Twelve horses and four chariots actually enter into a contest of speed, although their movements are regulated by mechanism and they are constantly in view of the audience. Matinees will be given Wednesday, Friday, (Christmas Day) and Saturday.

Board of Health.

The Board of Health held its monthly meeting Thursday night and transacted routine business. Inspector Seymour P. Gilbert gave an account of the meeting of the State Sanitary Association at Lakewood, and of the convention held in New York on Wednesday, at which problems of mosquito extermination were discussed.

See Chas. W. Smith's announcement of Christmas gift suggestions in this issue of the CITIZEN.—*Adv.*

Trolley Items.

Regular passengers on the Montclair and Caldwell trolley line have recently heard rumors that the rates of fare between those places and Newark would be reduced by the Public Service Corporation January 1. There is no foundation to the stories. President Thomas N. McCarter, through Secretary Frederick Evans, denied them on Thursday morning. He said no change was contemplated.

The stories had it that after the first of the year the fare to Montclair would be five cents instead of six, as at present, and that the fare to Caldwell would be reduced to ten cents. The graduating scale of fares to Montclair, Verona and Caldwell has long been a cause of much complaint on the part of a majority of the public. They hold that there ought to be a five and a ten-cent rate, instead of dealing in pennies and causing long delays at the Glen Ridge line and at St. Luke's place, Montclair. It was the impression that the change was to be made at the end of the month.

The Caldwell line is now running better than for a long time, although the traffic is so heavy that more cars are needed. For the first time in several months the cars are going through without switching back and forth three or four times, as was the case during the summer and early fall because of the excavation for the Cedar Grove pipe-line. The line has been finished now, and Bloomfield avenue is fixed for the winter. The west-bound cars go through on a straight track.

Added to this relief from delay and annoyance is the fact that there is now more power. The high tension engines in the new power house are supplying enough current to keep the cars going without the delays that were so frequent a few months ago, when the power gave out every five or ten minutes. This improvement is noticed on all the other lines also, and the change will be still more marked when all the new generators are working, as they are expected to be in the spring.

Firemen's Relief Association.

At a meeting of the local Firemen's Relief Association Tuesday night a report from the State Firemen's Association was read informing the members of the proposed action of the State Association in regard to the matter of firemen's exemption from taxation, recently declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. The following resolution was adopted:

"That the association requests legislators to do their best to aid in the passage of such bill or bills to bring about the exemption of firemen from $500 of taxable value as may be prepared and presented to the next Legislature by the Executive Committee of the New Jersey State Firemen's Association, which has the matter in charge."

Copies of the resolution were ordered sent to Senator Batchelor and Assemblyman-elect H. L. Johnstone. The association also elected officers for the ensuing year as follows: President, Wm. L. Johnson; Vice-President, Herman Eichorn; Secretary and Treasurer, T. Howell Johnson; members of the Board of Visitors for three years, W. B. Corby and Joseph B. Rowson.

Ungrateful Conduct.

When Charles Lyons, a young man who has at various times resided in Brookdale, applied a week ago to Edward Kimbal of Alexander avenue, Montclair, for a place to sleep, he concocted a story of sufficient intensity to melt the heart of Mr. Kimbal, who gave him shelter for the night. Lyons reclined upon a couch for the night and Mr. Kimbal retired to his bed with a feeling of having assisted the fallen, and as a consequence that he would receive a big mark by the recording angel.

Lyons, however, did not rest so easy; his mind wandered to things more earthy; and becoming highly magnetized by the earth's current, found Mr. Kimbal's watch and chain attached to his hand. He evidently could not release it, and not wishing to awaken his benefactor, he took a quiet trip about five o'clock.

Mr. Kimbal, of course, when dressing missed his timepiece, and he notified Chief of Police Gallagher. A warrant was issued, and Detectives Reilly and Claren soon found the watch, which had been sold to a saloon-keeper for $2. Lyons was picked up in Newark Saturday night by these officers, and Recorder Yost of Montclair held him in $200 bail for the Grand Jury.

Dr. McDuffie Called to Baltimore.

Rev. Dr. Marshall V. McDuffie, who has been pastor of the Prospect Street Baptist Church, East Orange, during the last six years, has received a call to the pastorate of the Seventh Baptist Church of Baltimore. Dr. MDuffie does not care to speak about his course in the matter, but it has been stated that he will announce to his congregation that he will accept the call. The new field is a very promising one, and the church has in past years been in charge of many eminent divines. Dr. McDuffie has made many friends in the Oranges.

SUPPLY AND COST.

TWO FACTORS THAT WILL DECIDE AN ELECTION ON THE WATER QUESTION.

Advocates of Municipal Ownership Must Find a Source of Supply and Must Show Economy in Favor of a Local Water Department—Available Sources of Supply that are Not Wanted—The Issue Not One of Mere Change in Retail Merchants.

There is not much doubt but what the Town Council will take immediate steps toward calling another special election on the water supply question. In the opinion of not a few people the acceptance of an offer of $90,000 by the Orange Water Company for its plant in this town has brought about a satisfactory situation in regard to that subject, and that no time should be lost in effecting a final settlement. While the sudden drop of $60,000 by the water company in the price asked for its plant caused much surprise in official circles and a general feeling of elation among the advocates of municipal ownership, it is by no means certain that the purchase of the plant will be ratified at the polls unless satisfactory assurances can be given with respect to certain other matters that are of equal importance with mere ownership of the water mains.

Determining factors in the election will be the source of water supply and the cost of conducting a water department. If no satisfactory information can be furnished with regard to these two important queries many people will not accept the risk of any change from present conditions, which, while not satisfactory, are in evidence and not altogether unbearable.

It has been stated in a general way that several sources of water supply are available in the event of the town owning its plant and placing itself in a position to negotiate with people who have water to sell. Everbody takes it for granted that the East Jersey Water Company stands ready at any time to make a contract with the town for a supply of water, but one of the strongest arguments brought forward in favor of municipal ownership of the water mains is that it will enable the town to steer clear of the East Jersey company and its Passaic river water and obtain a better supply from other sources. Some of the advocates of municipal ownership do not favor getting water from the city of Newark, even if that were possible, as it would place a strong and dangerous link in the annexation chain which Newark is suspected of forging. With the East Jersey Water Company and the city of Newark cut out of the possibilities of water supply, the question so far as the general public is concerned is one of vagueness and uncertainty, and as long as it continues in that state many people will hesitate about voting for any change in existing conditions.

It has been stated during the past week, and upon very good authority—no less than a member of the Water Committee of the East Orange City Council—that in less than a year East Orange will be in a position to sell to Bloomfield all the water that this town wants to buy, and will sell it at a right price. If a statement like the above can be placed before the people as a certainty, it will tend to turn many people in favor of municipal ownership, who are now in doubt how they will vote.

The Water Committee of the Town Council in its inquiries as to possible sources of supply has learned of parties who are in a position to make a contract, and there is not much doubt but what the public will be given the full benefit of that information. There is, of course, to be considered the rounding out to its full completeness the desire of the municipal ownership advocates, and that is public ownership of both the water mains and the source of supply, and it is urged with no small amount of enthusiastic earnestness on the part of ardent municipalists that such a thing is possible and ought to be carried out. As the case stands to-day the only known and positive source of supply of which the general public is aware is the East Jersey Water Company, and the situation presents itself something like this: The East Jersey Water Company sells water to the Orange Water Company at a certain rate per million gallons, and the latter company retails the water here either at a profit or loss, the company claims at a loss. If the town takes the place of the Orange Water Company and buys water at the same rate, it will retail to the people. The case resolves itself into a simple one of a change of retail merchants, with the difference that one of them meets all his own expense accounts, while the expense account of the other one would come out of the pockets of the taxpayer. Judged from that standpoint the argument in favor of change is neither strong or enticing.

If the advocates of municipal ownership want to carry an election in favor of their theory, it is up to them to demonstrate to the people beyond all question of doubt that a supply of pure and wholesome water at a reasonable price is available, and that the addition of a water department to the functions of government will prove a matter of economy to the taxpayers instead of an additional burden to them.

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